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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - CUBA: CASTRO TRANSITION

¶1. On August 2, conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 102,000) carried an editorial "The Awaited and Complex Cuban Transition." Quote:

"It is in everyone's interest...for the transition in Cuba to be as non-traumatic as possible.... The United States and the international community should let the process take its own course and try not to push and pull. Washington's unsuccessful policies toward Cuba have five decades of history. Let us hope that some lessons have been learned."

¶2. On August 2, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 116,807) carried an editorial entitled "Fidel Castro and his Delegating Power." Quote:

"It is too soon and would be speculation to anticipate what will happen when Fidel Castro leaves power for good.... However, his permanent absence is likely to increase the possibility of revenge, internal problems, as well as the opportunity for some form of transition to democracy. In both cases, the Cuban army's control and the policy the U.S. chooses to implement will be crucial.... The pressure from anti-Castro groups in Miami on different U.S. administrations has had minimal impact on Cuba's affairs and created a strong internal resistance that, in the end, only helped Castro. Hopefully these bad experiences will not occur again. Cuba's future is a matter that concerns Cubans only."

KELLY